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SUBJECT: New PM Nomination Delayed

REF: Ulaanbaatar 28

¶1. (U) It now appears that the State Great Hural (SGH) will consider the nomination of the new Prime Minister later this week. The SGH normally holds plenary sessions on Thursday and Friday. The Fall session of the SGH is now slated to recess after the Friday, January 27 session, and next sit when the Spring session opens in April. However, if the SGH does not confirm both the new PM and new Cabinet this week, its session almost certainly would be extended. Next week's Mongolian New Year's holiday might delay matters.

¶2. (SBU) Parliament had appeared poised to confirm MPRP chairman M. Enkhbold as Prime Minister last Friday. Formal nomination papers were submitted to President Enkhbayar on Friday morning, and legislators and government staff stayed at Government House until 8 PM Friday evening on the expectation that Enkhbayar (who until June 2005 was the MPRP chairman) would quickly forward the nomination to the SGH. However, Enkhbayar summoned Democratic Party (DP) leaders on Friday afternoon and urged them to join in the new government, which the MPRP is styling as the "National Unity Government" (as opposed to the outgoing "Grand Coalition Government" between the MPRP and the DP). According to senior DP sources, the party rebuffed Enkhbayar's appeal, and subsequently reiterated in a letter to the President the party's position that it intends to go into opposition.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Parliament's failure to confirm Enkhbold on Friday likely will only prove a brief hiccup in the MPRP's move to form a new government. However, the episode underscores the difficulty the MPRP has had with completely scripting the process in the wake of its decision to bring down the government abruptly.  
Slutz